

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /119 W

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R 181905Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0965

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, FR

SUBJECT: FRANCOISE GIROUD, STATE SECRETARY FOR WOMEN'S
AFFAIRS

1. SUMMARY. A CHARISMATIC FIGURE IN A TECHNOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, FRANCOISE GIROUD BRINGS A FRESH INDEPENDENT NOTE TO THE GOF. WITH WIDE ACCEPTANCE IN BOTH THE INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING THE FAR LEFT, GIROUD CAN BE EXPECTED TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY. GISCARD WILL TRY TO USE HER AS A BRIDGE TO THE LEFT. BY THE APPOINTMENT OF THIS DEDICATED FIGHTER FOR ABORTION REFORMS, GISCARD MAY BE PREPARING TO TACKLE THIS THORNY ISSUE WHICH MAY BE DIVISIVE IN THE FALL, PUTTING THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY UNDER CONSIDERABLE STRAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. FRANCOISE GIROUD, 58, JOURNALIST, FORMER RESISTANCE FIGHTER AND PUBLISHER OF L' EXPRESS, WAS NAMED STATE
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SECRETARY FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS ON JULY 16. SHE SPENT

THE FIRST PART OF HER CAREER IN FILMS AND WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (1937) IN FRANCE. AS THE PROTEGE OF TWO GREAT DIRECTORS -- RENOIR AND PAGNOL -- GIROUD WAS WELL RECEIVED BY BOTH THE FRENCH INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC; SHE CONTINUES TO ENJOY GREAT PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND ACCEPTANCE EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO VIGOROUSLY ATTACK L'EXPRESS.

3. CO-FOUNDER OF ELLE (FRENCH EQUIVALENT OF VOGUE) IN 1945, SHE WAS THE MAGAZINE'S EDITOR UNTIL 1953 WHEN, TOGETHER WITH JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER (JJSS) SHE FOUNDED L'EXPRESS. UNTIL BECOMING THE MAGAZINE'S PUBLISHER IN 1971, GIROUD WAS ITS SENIOR EDITOR. SHE IS NOT EXPECTED TO RELINQUISH ANY OF HER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AS A RESULT OF HER APPOINTMENT. HER WEEKLY EDITORIAL IN L'EXPRESS WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE HER WITH AN IMPORTANT FORUM FOR HER IDEAS.

4. GIROUD IS A PROLIFIC, ACERBIC WRITER WITH AN IRONIC TOUCH. BESIDES SEVERAL FILM ADAPTATIONS AND SCRIPTS SHE HAS WRITTEN ON THE PARISIAN JET SET (LE TOUT-PARIS, 1952) AND FRENCH YOUTH (LA NOUVELLE VAGUE, 1958). THESE FACILE LITERARY EFFORTS CONTRIBUTED TO HER GROWING CULT IN FRANCE AND GAVE HER A WIDE POPULAR FOLLOWING. SHE FIRST ATTRACTED POLITICAL ATTENTION WITH HER EDITORIALS FOR EXPRESS -- A COLLECTION OF WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN 1972 UNDER THE TITLE "A FISTFUL OF WATER."

5. GIROUD'S MAJOR CONCERNS IN HER NEW POSITION WILL BE BIRTH CONTROL, ABORTION REFORM AND EARLIER OPTIONAL RETIREMENT FOR WOMEN. WHILE NOT ALWAYS IN ACCORD WITH JJSS, HER PARTNER AND FREQUENT OPPONENT WHO IS MORE CYNICAL ABOUT THE US EXAMPLE, GIROUD HAS BEEN

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IMPRESSED BY THE US ACHIEVEMENTS IN THESE FIELDS.

6. ALTHOUGH SHE DISCLAIMS ANY PARTY ALLEGIANCE, GIROUD CAN BE CLASSED AS A MEMBER OF THE INTELLECTUAL LEFT; DURING THE SECOND ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN SHE SUPPORTED MITTERRAND. SHE IS A CONVINCED EUROPEANIST AND HAS WRITTEN STRONG EDITORIALS SUPPORTING THE EC AND BRITISH MEMBERSHIP. ALONE AMONG GISCARD'S STATE SECRETARIES, SHE COMMANDS A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC FOLLOWING AMONG ALL SECTORS OF THE ELECTORATE.

7. HER PERSONAL LIFE IS SOMETHING OF A MYSTERY. A GRANDMOTHER, SHE IS THE SUBJECT OF MUCH SPECULATION -- HER NAME WAS OFTEN LINKED WITH FORMER PREMIER FELIX GAILLARD. SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH.

8. COMMENT. GIROUD'S APPOINTMENT COMES AS SOMETHING
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OF A SURPRISE AFTER HER FIRM REFUSAL OF A SIMILAR BUT LOWER-RANKING POST ("DELEGATE-GENERAL FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS") FIVE WEEKS EARLIER, AND PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF HER BITING REMARKS ABOUT PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC IN AN EXPRESS EDITORIAL JUST AFTER SHE REFUSED ("HE'LL PUT MY OFFICE IN THE MATIGNON KITCHEN AND HAVE ME MAKING COFFEE FOR THE UDR"). WE HAVE HEARD THAT CHIRAC INITIALLY OPPOSED GIROUD'S APPOINTMENT IN VIEW OF HER OPEN SUPPORT OF MITTERRAND, BUT THAT HE WAS OVERRULED BY GISCARD. OTHER UDR MEMBERS WERE ALSO OPPOSED, PARTICULARLY DEFENSE MINISTER SOUFFLET, STILL ANGRY OVER THE JJSS MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT. NOW JJSS HAS RESIGNED, THE POLITICAL CLIMATE HAS COOLED, AND HER APPOINTMENT IS NOT LIKELY TO INCENSE GAULLISTS TO THE SAME DEGREE.

9. GISCARD HAS REASON TO BE SATISFIED AT HAVING
PERSUADED GIROUD TO JOIN HIS GOVERNMENT. HE THUS
REASSERTS HIS COMPLETE AUTHORITY OVER CHIRAC, FULFILLS
HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISE TO CREATE A STATE SECRETARY FOR
WOMEN'S AFFAIRS AND MAKES A BOW TOWARDS OPENING HIS NEW
MAJORITY TO THE LEFT. BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER
HIS SHIP OF STATE WILL HAVE ANY SMOOTHER SAILING WITH
MADAME GIROUD ON BOARD THAN IT DID WITH JJSS.
IRWIN

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